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INFO RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MEXICO 006313

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SUBJECT: THREE BOMBS EXPLODE IN MEXICO CITY

REF: MEXICO 6182

Classified By: ACTING MINISTER COUNSELOR FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS ALAN D. MELTZER FOR REASONS: 1.4(B/D).

11. (U) SUMMARY. Shortly after midnight on November 6, three bombs exploded at distinct locations in Mexico City. Significant damage was inflicted on the Federal Electoral Tribunal (Trife), the national headquarters of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), and a branch office of Scotiabank. Two additional bombs were found and dismantled, one outside of the same Scotiabank branch office and another near the PRI headquarters. There were no resulting deaths or injuries. No one has claimed responsibility for the bombings. End Summary.

12. (U) Shortly after midnight on November 6, three bombs exploded at distinct locations in Mexico City. Significant damage was inflicted on the Trife building, the national headquarters of the PRI, and the Tepepan branch office of Scotiabank. One bomb failed to explode and was disarmed by Mexican authorities outside of the same branch. Another bomb was reportedly found near PRI headquarters and dismantled.

13. (C) No individual or organization has claimed responsibility for the bombings. The People's Popular Assembly of Oaxaca (APPO), the radical group responsible for the current instability in the state, has explicitly denied responsibility. All GOM reports to the embassy emphasized that these attacks are domestic in origin, without apparent links to international terrorism. However, the government officials have not yet cited hard evidence to support the claim. Two calls were made to the police notifying them of the bombs shortly before the explosions, suggesting that those responsible were eager to avoid casualties.

14. (C) According to senior officials at the Secretariat of Public Security, the bombs were made of ammonium nitrate fuel oil (ANFO), with traces of diesel, constructed with a timer and an electronic initiator. In one bomb, officials also reported the use of two kilograms of Tovex 100: a gelatin-based, highly explosive, ready-made industrial dynamite. While the bomb ingredients are easily attainable, their construction and execution was far more sophisticated than that of the spate of pipe bombs blasts in Mexico several years ago. According to Mexican law enforcement, this is the first use in Mexico of the ANFO variety of bomb.

15. (C) Official reports conflict with respect to the placement of the bombs. The head of the bomb squad initially reported that the three detonated bombs were located inside of the targeted buildings, all of which are very secure. Another more senior official subsequently explained that the bombs were set within the perimeter fencing but outside the buildings themselves. The bombing sites are located at considerable distances from each other in Mexico City.

16. (U) Numerous copycat bomb threats followed the explosions on Monday, November 6. Authorities responded to threats towards high profile targets like the Secretariat of Foreign Relations (SRE) and the Torre Mayor, a prominent office building in the capital, all of which proved false.

17. (SBU) While no motive is known, at least two of the three targeted institutions have played roles in recent contentious political issues. The PRI, Mexico's undisputed ruling party from 1929 until the election of President Vicente Fox in 2000, has played a strong and controversial hand in the current political crisis in the state of Oaxaca (see reftel). The governor is a member of the PRI, and during the crisis he has been supported by the party establishment, who have opposed his removal from office. With respect to the Trife, many on the political left allege that the tribunal acted improperly in dismissing the majority of the electoral challenges filed by the losing candidate Lopez Obrador, and by certifying Felipe Calderon as President-elect.

18. (C) The reason for the targeting of Scotiabank is less clear. One possible explanation is that Scotiabank has been involved in the case against former Mexican miners' union leader Napoleon Gomez Urrutia, charged with misappropriating

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USD55 million of union funds. Supporters of Gomez may resent the bank's reported assistance in the GOM's investigation of Gomez. Conversely, Gomez's opponents have suggested that the bank somehow was complicit in this alleged misappropriation.

19. (U) President Vicente Fox condemned the bombings as an attempt to frighten the public and reasserted his obligation to guarantee the safety of Mexicans and preserve the peace and security of the country. The president's spokesperson stated that the investigation will be carried out by the federal Attorney General's Office as well as the Mexico City Government. President-elect Felipe Calderon called on all Mexicans to "categorically" reject this kind of violence. Mexico City Mayor Alejandro Encinas classified the bombings as a political act. He also attempted to quell public fears, urging city residents to not be subject to "extreme worry."

110. (C) COMMENT: While at least two (and possibly all three) of the targets selected by the bombers strongly suggest a political motive, the political significance of the targets varies, blurring the message of the attacks. What is clear, however is that the bombings were sophisticated, well-organized, and planned for dramatic effect. With APPO having issued an unequivocal (and we believe credible) denial of responsibility, the search for those responsible will shift to other lower profile anti-establishment elements in Mexico. End comment.

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